Development of Forests in Assam

5056. SHRI PRAKANTA WARISA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Assam Government has sent any scheme/proposal pertaining to development of forests;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the steps being taken by Government in this regard; and

(d) the details of financial assistance provided by the Central Government for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) The Government of Assam has prepared a comprehensive plan of 20 years as State Forestry Action Programme (SFAP) for sustainable development of forests in the State. During this period, besides developing and strengthening the institutions. State has proposed a programme for regeneration of 0.92 million-hectare natural forests and plantation on 0.18 million-hectare non-forest lands. Total financial requirement for these programmes of 20 years is Rs. 2072.04 crores. The current level of financial investments in forestry sector of the State is much less than the required in this comprehensive plan.

(c) The Central Government have forwarded a project of Assam of Rs. 685.03 crores for a period of 10 years to the World Bank in October, 1999. The Ministry has taken up with the Planning Commission for enhancing the outlay to forestry sector and requested States to mobilise funds from all possible sources for this purpose.

(d) The Central Government have provided financial assistance of Rs. 468.64 lakh to the State of Assam under centrally sponsored schemes in last three years for the development of forests.

Timber Mafia in North-East

5057. SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA NAHATA:
SHRI AMAR SINGH:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to efer to answer to Unstarred Question 1715 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 10th March, 2000 and state:

(a) what are the names of the timber mafia who despatched 177 wagons of timber from North-East and for whom;

(b) whether such persons have not been arrested as yet and if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) whether the multi-disciplinary team to probe into the matter has since been constituted and if so, the details thereof and by when the probe is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) For identification of persons involved in illegal fellings, conservation and transportation of timber etc. the process of verification of documents such as transit passes, railway receipts, original documents maintained by the State Governments etc. have been undertaken, which has not been completed so far.

(c) A Special Investigation Team comprising of four members has been constituted by this Ministry for detailed investigations. Steps have been taken to expedite the investigation by the Special Investigation Team.

Cutting of Logs for Village Festival

5058. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY:
SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether 50,000 logs were cut during the first week of March, 2000 near Bangalore for village festival;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action proposed to enlighten the locals of the area about harmful effects on ecology by observing such rituals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) to (c) As per information received from the State Government of Karnataka, about 4000 to 5000 branches from trees were cut in surrounding village for village festival ritual at Sargoor village of Channapatha taluk in Bangalore Rural District on 28.2.2000. However, no trees have been felled from the forest areas. This is for an old ritual where the villagers of the nearby villages assemble at Sargoor village infront of Basaveshwara temple. The festival is called "KONDA HABBA".